

REMARKS

In the official action, claims 1-12, 14-25, and 27-38 were rejected as anticipated by Futamura (U.S. 5,740,056). Claims 13, 26, and 39 were objected to, but indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

By way of the foregoing amendments, claims 1-7, 11, 14-20, 24, 27-33, and 37 have been amended and dependent claims 40-42 have been added, leaving claims 1-42 pending in this application. A check in the amount of \$27 is enclosed herewith for payment of the fee for three additional dependent claims.

As an initial matter, the applicant wishes to thank the examiner for the telephonic interviews conducted on November 10, 2004 and November 18, 2004. During the interviews, the teachings of Futamura and the subject matter recited in claim 1 as amended herein were discussed in detail. The examiner indicated that he believed the proposed language of amended claim 1 to be patentable over Futamura.

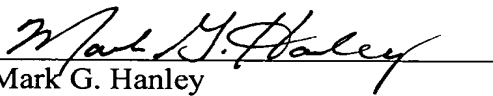
Turning to the art rejections, independent claim 1 is patentable over Futamura. In particular, Futamura fails to teach or suggest a method of generating embroidery data that automatically classifies points from edge contour data, wherein each of the classified points is proximate to at least one skeletal node associated with the image data, and wherein the at least one skeletal node includes at least one of a junction node or an end point node. Accordingly, independent claim 1 and claims 2-13, and 40 dependent thereon are now in condition for allowance.

For at least the reasons set forth above, the remaining claims 14-39, 41, and 42 are also in condition for allowance.

If the examiner is of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this case, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number identified below.

Respectfully submitted,

HANLEY, FLIGHT & ZIMMERMAN, LLC
Suite 4220
20 North Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 580-1020

By: 
Mark G. Hanley
Registration No. 44,736

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